

# **WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT THE DEATH OF BABIES AND CHILDREN?**

When babies or children die, the pain of parents, family and friends is immense. Whether the situation is from an intentional act (abortion or crimes) or an unintentional act (miscarriage, illness, accidents), grief abounds. Tough questions arise. Answers are sought.

What happens to babies or children who die before they are mature enough to respond to the Gospel? John MacArthur helpfully and succinctly answers this question, "Instant Heaven."

*Here are 5 Bible passages that are helpful to seeing these truths:*

1. **David's Response to the Death of His Baby** (punishment for his adultery with Bathsheba):  
David realizes he will be united in heaven with his child one day. "Then his servants said to him, 'What is this thing that you have done? You fasted and wept for the child while he was alive; but when the child died, you arose and ate food.' 22 He said, 'While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept, for I said, 'Who knows whether the LORD will be gracious to me, that the child may live?' 23 But now he is dead. Why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will not return to me.'" (2 Samuel 12:21-23, ESV)
2. **Entry into the Promised Land is Granted to Young Children.** Why? Israel's sin of rebellion against God (for not entering into the promised land) was held only against those who were mature enough to discern between good and evil. "And as for your little ones, who you said would become a prey, and your children, who today have no knowledge of good or evil, they shall go in there. And to them I will give it, and they shall possess it." (Deuteronomy 1:39, ESV)
3. **Job's Response to Suffering:** Job realized that to be stillborn was better than to be alive. Why? Job understood stillborn babies to be in heaven. "Why did I not die at birth, come out from the womb and expire? ...13 For then I would have lain down and been quiet; I would have slept; then I would have been at rest 16 Or why was I not as a hidden stillborn child, as infants who never see the light? ... 17 there the weary are at rest." (Job 3:11-17, ESV)
4. **King Solomon's comparison of living a prosperous, long-lived life with that a stillborn child.** Who is better off? A stillborn child who "finds rest." "If a man fathers a hundred children and lives many years, so that the days of his years are many, but his soul is not satisfied with life's good things, and he also has no burial, I say that a stillborn child is better off than he. 4 For it comes in vanity and goes in darkness, and in darkness its name is covered. 5 Moreover, it has not seen the sun or known anything, yet it finds rest rather than he." (Ecclesiastes 6:3-5, ESV)
5. **When unbelieving parents sacrifice their children for their own selfish purposes, God refers to them as "innocents."** This implies God's grace in looking upon them as innocent."Because the people have forsaken me and have profaned this place by making offerings in it to other gods whom neither they nor their fathers nor the kinds of Judah have known; and because they have filled this place with the blood of innocents." (Jeremiah 19:4, ESV).

Are babies and infants conceived in sin? Do they sin? Yes. Are they guilty before God and deserving of eternal death? Yes. (Original sin, inherited sin nature, total depravity) (1 Kings 8:46, Isaiah 48:8, Proverbs 20:9, Psalm 58:3; 143:2, Ecclesiastes 7:20, Jeremiah 17:9, Romans 5:12, Ephesians 2:3) "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."(Psalm 51:5, ESV)

“It is true they sin, little ones sin. Little children disobey, they're selfish, they're angry, etc. But they are incapable of understanding the moral essence of that sin. They are incapable of understanding God. And they are incapable of understanding the gospel. They are incapable of exercising a true repentance toward God and a saving faith so that they are with excuse. Whereas the pagans in Romans 1 are without excuse because they are capable of knowing and understanding the revelation God has given them in creation and conscience and they are capable of faith. So unbelief for them is a willful choice.” John MacArthur

**Does God’s grace cover those babies and children who die? Yes. The weight of Scripture points to them being safe in God's grace.**

“All children who die before they reach the condition of accountability by which they convincingly understand their sin and corruption and embrace the gospel by faith are graciously saved eternally by God through the work of Jesus Christ being elect by sovereign choice, innocent of willful sin, rebellion and unbelief by which works they would be justly condemned to eternal punishment.” John MacArthur

What happens to babies who die in the womb? What about infants and young children who die; do they go to Heaven? What is the age of accountability? These are important questions that many people have asked themselves as they or others they know have struggled with the loss of a child. Got to [gotquestions.org](http://gotquestions.org) for answers to these tough questions... "[What happens to babies and young children when they die?](#)", "[Where do I find the age of accountability in the Bible?](#)", "[Do mentally ill people go to heaven?](#)", "[What does the Bible say about household salvation?](#)", "[What does the Bible say about infant baptism?](#)"

I have not found a pastor or teacher who has addressed the issue with such biblical depth and breadth as John MacArthur. His book, [Safe in the Arms of God](#), answers the below questions: "Where is my child?", "What can we say with certainty to those with empty arms?", "How does God regard children?", "What if my child is not among the elect?", "Will I see my child again?", "What is my child’s life like in heaven?", "Why did my child have to die?", "How shall we minister to those who are grieving?" Here are two sermons in which John MacArthur exposites the relevant biblical passages and also addresses many of the same questions as in his book.

- [The Salvation of Babies Who Die - Part 1](http://www.gty.org/Resources/Sermons/80-242) (<http://www.gty.org/Resources/Sermons/80-242>)
- [The Salvation of Babies Who Die - Part 2](http://www.gty.org/Resources/Sermons/80-243) (<http://www.gty.org/Resources/Sermons/80-243>)
- Also, an article: [The Age of Accountability](http://www.gty.org/Resources/Articles/4836) (<http://www.gty.org/Resources/Articles/4836>)

2 Samuel 12:21-23 "His servants asked him, "Why are you acting this way? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept, but now that the child is dead, you get up and eat!" 22 He answered, "While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept. I thought, 'Who knows? The LORD may be gracious to me and let the child live.' 23 But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me."